MOSES AND DEUTERONOMY:

OR

THE PRESENT STATE OF THE QUESTION AS TO THE DATE AND AUTHORSHIP OF THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY.

By MODERATOR.

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"Search the Scriptures."—*John* v. 39.

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PREFACE.

THE following essay is a humble attempt to state briefly, comprehensively, and impartially the chief difficulties of the Deuteronomic question, and the chief theories which have been framed for the explanation of the difficulties. It was drawn up about a year ago, not with any polemical purpose, nor yet with a view to publication, but solely for the satisfaction of the writer and a few of his intimate friends who take a great interest in the general question, but who have no connexion with existing Deuteronomic controversies or controversialists.

It is not without considerable hesitation and misgiving that the writer commits his humble attempt to the press. The great difficulty and complexity of the subject, the risk of falling into error and one-sidedness, in even the most singleminded endeavour to discuss it, and the still greater risk in the present excited state of the ecclesiastical mind, of incurring grievous misunderstanding, misconstruction and misrepresentation of motive—these were all powerful dissuasives. On the other hand, the writer was moved to publication by the strong conviction which possessed him that, *as a whole*, the Deuteronomic question is still but very imperfectly understood in this country, even by men of education, and that much good might be done by a short, succinct, and "all-round" view of it contained in a small pamphlet—such a brief statement, in fact, as a busy man might easily run over at the close of a long day's work. A hasty, though comprehensive, glance of this sort may not greatly enlarge a man's *knowledge;* but it will bring home to him the extent of his *ignorance*. Like the view from the top of a high mountain, it shows to him, in a hazy and indistinct way, the wide extent of the field that has to be explored. It does not qualify him to pass a judgment on the

subject, but it puts him on his guard against passing a rash, narrow, and ignorant judgment. It teaches him humility, care, and caution. It impresses on him the wisdom of trusting chiefly, in a matter of science and learning, to patient investigation and "the long results of time."

The writer hopes that what he has written will be read with "the combination of the open eye with the devout heart," and by Christians of all denominations. The subject is entirely unsectarian, and the interest in it is greatly enhanced by the approaching issue of a revised translation of the Scriptures—the result of the combined labours, for many years, of the leading scholars of most of the leading denominations of English-speaking Christians, both in this country and in America. The new version would be received with greatly increased satisfaction should the dark cloud raised by these unsettling questions begin to "lift" previous to its issue. The study of these questions must also form an excellent preparation for the due appreciation of the superiority of an improved translation. The new version and the new views may, between them, stir men up to a more general, a more systematic, a more critical, and a more profitable "searching" of the "Scriptures."

MOSES AND DEUTERONOMY.

Part First—THE DIFFICULTIES.

"Only let critical researches into the origin and character of the sacred documents be conducted on the principle here laid down, which combines reverence for spiritual truth with freedom of intellectual enquiry, and we need have neither bitter recriminations between our divines nor apprehensions for the faith, which is equally dear to all. It is indeed only through the combination of the open eye, with the devout heart, that the highest truth can be obtained."—*Quarterly Review*, cxlvii. 336.

The writer has devoted a good deal of time and thought to the question of the Authorship of Deuteronomy, using every means and appliance at his command, and consulting impartially critics and commentators of every variety of view. His object has been to know all that can with certainty be known in explanation of an interesting but obscure Biblical problem. He began his researches without any conscious bias, unless it might be the natural hope that he might end by finding that but little modification of the old accepted doctrine was necessary in order to reconcile criticism and tradition. He had no theory of his own upon the subject; neither did he expect that amongst the theories of the day he should find any one that could be deemed entirely satisfactory or capable of explaining the whole of the facts.

Still less did he dream of achieving the discovery of such a theory himself, or even of making any solid contribution to the solution of the question. It was a negative rather than a positive result that he chiefly aimed at—the avoidance of misleading error rather than the attainment of certain truth.

In a question of this sort this result, as it appeared to him, is about the utmost that is attainable, at least, at an early stage of the investigation, by any one who is not a specialist. And even this is not little. Next to the power of

establishing the true theory is that of detecting and avoiding false theories, and refusing to close the investigation till sufficient light has been obtained. This power cannot be expected but as the result of patient dispassionate and impartial study of the whole question from every point of view. Even then it may not be attained; so apt is a man to be misled by his sympathies and preconceptions, and by the confident dogmatism of out and out patisans, on one side or the other.

Such misleading may be said to be courted, and to be altogether inevitable in every case where the inquirer sets out with a very strong prejudice or prepossession in favour of the establishment of any one particular conclusion; for, from the first, he looks at the evidence with the eye of an advocate rather than with that of a judge; he commits himself to a view before he has any adequate knowledge of the arguments for and against—and once committed to it he sticks to it to the last against all counter-evidence short of absolute demonstration.

Instances of such rash self-committal—tending from the high authority of the parties to a decided committal of the Scriptures themselves, in the eye of the uninstructed, to one particular untenable interpretation—were, as every one knows, very common in the early days of every modern science which has a bearing on the interpretation of Scripture, astronomy, geology, and biology. Take the first two, astronomy and geology. As these two sciences, one after the other, struggled into light, they established conclusions which were at variance with the traditional interpretation of Scripture. In general, therefore, the authorized interpreters of Scripture set themselves at once without due inquiry or consideration to deny and denounce the conclusions in question as contrary to the teaching of Scripture, and therefore untrue. If anything could have acted as a sufficient warning and deterrent against such rashness, it would have been the infatuated condemnation of Galileo for maintaining the Copernican truth, that the sun and not the

earth is the centre of the solar system—an act, the rashness of which has been made only more glaring and compromising by recent laboured attempts to explain it away.* But the warning was little heeded. When after another century and a-half, geologists began to unfold like undreamt of truths regarding the earth, as astronomers had done regarding the heavens, a like blind and shortsighted course was taken. Geologists were denounced as not only wrong, but wicked. The literal interpretation of the first chapter of Genesis was declared to be the only true interpretation, and figurative interpretations devised with the view of reconciling Scripture and science were scouted as utterly inadmissible, even by such a man as Bishop Horsley.† But science only requires time to ensure the general acceptance of its demonstrated truths. In the long run no authority or prejudice can withstand the consensus of competent judges. Thus the once banned and pro-

* "It is of course a matter of life and death to modern Ultramontanes to show that the Popes were never officially committed to the condemnation of Galileo's teaching, and Gebler, as we have seen, acquiesces in their verdict. But it is in fact based on the merest *ex post facto* special pleading, as was conclusively shown in a pamphlet on the *Pontifical Decrees Against the Motion of the Earth*, published in the year of the Vatican Council, 'by a Priest of the Province of Westminster.' The author first explains that the magical clause '*Sanctissimus confirmavit*,' &c., said to be providentially wanting to the decree, is wanting only because it did not come into use till many years after the condemnation of Galileo, while on the other hand there is abundant evidence that the decree of 1616—reaffirmed and enforced in 1632—was, and was intended and known to be, a strictly Papal judgment, emanating from Paul V. himself, who had expressly applied his mind to the doctrinal question at issue. It is further shown that the theory thus solemnly condemned as 'false, pernicious, heretical, and wholly opposed to Holy Scripture,' and ordered to be 'utterly abolished' (*ut prorsus tolleretur*) by Paul V., and which Galileo was required by his successor Urban VIII., on the strength of that decree, to 'abjure, curse, and detest' as 'an error and *heresy*,' had been for seventy years before the Church as a tolerated hypothesis, and was now formally and deliberately adjudicated upon because scientific men were coming to believe that it would or might turn out to be true."—*Sat. Review*, 1247, p. 357.

† They who seek or admit figurative expositions of such expressions as these seem to be not sufficiently aware that it is one thing to write a history, and quite another to compose riddles.—*Horsley, Sermon* xxiii.

scribed dogmas of astronomy and geology are now accepted truths. To doubt or disbelieve them argues a man either too ignorant or too eccentric for serious argument. Yet the lesson of caution which this triumph of science was so well fitted to teach interpreters, was but very imperfectly learnt. Scarcely had opposition to the latter of the two sciences, geology, died out, when other two sciences—biology, with its doctrine of evolution, and "the higher criticism," with its unsettling theories regarding the composition and authorship of the Books of Scripture, and of Deuteronomy in particular, drew down on themselves a succession of almost equally blind and ill-considered attacks. Again, instead of patiently and confidently abiding the result of investigation and discussion, men made haste to condemn and denounce, and to proclaim that if those views were true, the Scriptures must be false.

This was the first and natural impulse. Already, however, while these later new views are still under discussion, and are at best but plausible hypotheses, time has done much to modify the intolerant attitude of their most earnest opponents, especially as regards evolution. Theologians, who at first thought the evolution theory altogether irreconcilable with the Scriptural account of creation, now take an entirely different view of the whole question; and no longer hold that any particular *mode* of creation—whether by progressive evolution, or by separate acts—is necessarily implied in the Scripture narrative. The evolution difficulty is in fact fast coming to be regarded by theologians with as much calm indifference as the astronomical and geological difficulties.

It is somewhat different with the critical theories, which to the people of this country may be said to be comparatively new. Though it is very long since the existence of the difficulties on which the theories are based was first pointed out, and though the difficulties and the theories have been discussed fully and freely in Germany, for at least the last sixty or seventy years, and in England by a few critics, mostly on one side, for the last twenty, it is not too much to

say that it is only within the last two or three years that even the theological world has awoke to the gravity and importance of the subject, especially as regards Deuteronomy. English critics and commentators on the orthodox or traditional side have, as a rule, for some reason or other, scarcely ever grappled with the subject. Not only have they in most cases made no contribution of their own to the solution of the question; but they have generally, either by altogether ignoring the difficulty, or by slurring it over, so misrepresented the nature of it, as to mislead the ignorant and tantalize the studious.

This sort of treatment cannot be longer pursued without discrediting a commentator's authority, not only on this but on all cognate subjects, and, what is more serious, exciting an unwarrantable prejudice against the Scriptures, as if those who knew the sacred writings best, deemed them unfit to bear the light of science. Times have greatly changed of late. By the publication of Professor Robertson Smith's articles in the "Encyclopædia Britannica," and the controversies and legal proceedings consequent thereon, the gravity of the question has been made fully known to the whole reading public, at least in this northern part of the island. It is now the plainest policy to look the difficulty in the face, extenuating nothing, and courting rather than shunning investigation and discussion. The writer believes that if this course is boldly taken, and it is made plain that the question is entirely an open one, a far more satisfactory state of feeling would soon prevail in regard to it. It would come to be calmly and quietly discussed, and looked at from every point of view, and then, as was the case with those similar questions of former days, in course of time, more than one sufficiently satisfactory solution for it might be evolved by believing and reverent scholars. Above all, men would come to see that Christianity is not bound "to answer with its life" for the accuracy of any one solution.

The writer, therefore, hopes that he may be able to do a humble but real service to the calm and deliberate elucidation

of Bible truth, by endeavouring to state in the plainest and most direct way, the actual state of the important question as to the date and authorship of Deuteronomy.

In doing so, he will avoid, as far as possible, details and doubtful points, and try to fix attention on the chief difficulties as to the Mosaic authorship of the main part of Deuteronomy —those which after the most careful pondering of all explanations which have been offered, still stand out to his mind substantially unreduced, and calling for further explanation.

The difficulties divide themselves naturally into three classes, corresponding to the three books or sets of books in which they occur, viz. :—Difficulties arising

I. From the book of Deuteronomy itself.

II. From the books which precede Deuteronomy in the canon.

III. From the books which follow it in the canon.

In other words, there are difficulties in reconciling the Mosaic authorship of Deuteronomy.

I.—With certain chronological and historical statements in Deuteronomy.

II.—With the style of the book of Deuteronomy, and with the provisions of some of the laws which are recorded, as given by Moses, in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers.

III.—With the history and the ceremonial or ritual practice of Israel as recorded in Judges, and the books of Samuel and Kings, &c.

Taking these three sets of difficulties in their order, it will be found that they increase in force, but decrease in *obviousness.*

I.—The difficulties of the first class are obvious on a little reflection, especially to the Hebrew reader; but most, if not all, of them when taken by themselves appear capable of

reasonable explanation with the lights which we now possess, and making allowance for alterations by editors and copyists.

II.—The second class are not nearly so obvious, demanding, as they do, for their appreciation very careful comparison of book with book, law with law, style with style, &c.

III.—The difficulties of the third class are still less obvious than those of the second; for to have any due conception of their weight and force demands an intimate acquaintance and careful comparison of Deuteronomy with many of the subsequent historical and prophetical books of the Bible; demands, in short, a minute and accurate knowledge, a firm and comprehensive grasp of the history, the polity, and the language of Israel.

I.—The difficulties in the way of accepting the Mosaic authorship of Deuteronomy, contained in Deuteronomy itself, are of two classes :—

1. Those passages which plainly bear to have been written after the time of Moses, and after the people had settled in Canaan.

a. The very first passage in the book, "These are the words which Moses spake to the whole of Israel on the other* side of Jordan," &c.

The writer of this passage, according to the literal meaning, wrote on the west or Canaan side of Jordan; and Moses spoke "the words" on the east or Moab side. Therefore, inferentially, Moses was not the writer.

b. The passage which gives an account of the death and burial of Moses—xxxiv., 5 and 6.

c. The passage (xxxiv. 1) where the Lord is said to have showed Moses "all the land of Gilead unto *Dan*"—Dan, it is maintained, was not known as Dan at that time, but as Laish (Judges xviii. 27-29).

2. Other passages, which though not distinctly anachron-

* "On *this* side" in the authorised version.

isms, yet in their natural meaning, imply that a considerable time had elapsed between the period at which the events happened and that at which they were recorded.

a. Thus, iii. 14, "Jair the son of Manasseh took all the country of Argob unto the coasts of Geshuri and Maachathi, and called them "after his own name, Bashan-havoth-jair, *unto this day.*" The time that elapsed between the taking of the Bashan cities, or "Jair's livings," and the date of Moses speech was at most only a few months. Moses could hardly have used such an expression as "to this day" in such a case.

b. Again, xxxiv. 6, "No man knoweth of his sepulchre *unto this day*;" and verse 10, "And there arose not a prophet *since* in Israel like unto Moses."

c. "The Horims also dwelt in Seir beforetime; but the children of Esau succeeded them, when they had destroyed them from before them, and dwelt in their stead, *as Israel did unto the land of his possession,* which the Lord gave unto them" (ii. 12). The natural inference from the words in italics is that the whole passage was written after Israel had "destroyed" the Canaanites and "dwelt in their stead."

d. "Only Og king of Bashan remained of the remnant of giants; behold, his bedstead was a bedstead of iron; *is it not in Rabbath of the children of Ammon?*" (iii. 11) The natural inference here is that the writer was "referring to an antiquarian curiosity" instead of something which had been quite recently in use, and probably *seen,* as Og himself had been seen and slain by the people whom Moses was now addressing.

These anachronisms, real or apparent, present no serious difficulty *when taken by themselves.* Apart from possible individual explanations, there is nothing unnatural in the supposition that a later inspired writer, or writers, should have re-edited the Book, contributing explanatory notes, and after the manner of the time, inserting them in the text instead of putting them in the margin—nay, that such writer, or writers, should have compiled both the beginning and the end of the

book, or the whole historical setting of the Central Law Book (ch. v. 1 to xxvi. 16).*

II.—The difficulties of the second class, or those which we encounter in attempting to reconcile the law as given in Deuteronomy with the law as given in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, are not in themselves very serious matters. They are considerably more serious, however, in their combined, or cumulative, than in their individual aspect; and then they are much less easily disposed of than the first class, because they are of a more systematic character, and inhere in the substance of the work.

They consist of discrepancies which more or less pervade the whole of the Law Books:

1. The provisions of the Laws:
2. The tone of the Laws:
3. The style and diction of the Books:

all differ to some extent.

1. The chief differences in the legal provisions are almost all connected with the priests and the Levites—their position with respect to each other, and the tithes and dues or perquisites by which they were maintained.

a. The emoluments of the priests are to some extent different from those which are assigned to them in the previous books.

b. The emoluments of the Levites are different, their habitations also, and their general position.

c. But what differs most, and is most significant, is the relative position of priests and Levites in Deuteronomy and in the former books.

In the former books the priests are "the sons of Aaron;" in Deuteronomy they are "the sons of Levi," or the Levites.

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* "It is indeed possible that some, or perhaps all of the archæological and topographical remarks, which are interwoven in several places, *c. g.* ii. 10-12, 20-23; iii. 9, are insertions made by a later reviser, perhaps a much later reviser, after the book was complete."—*Speaker's Commentary, Deuteronomy, p.* 799.

In the former books, the priests are the servants of Jehovah —they "stand before Him to minister unto Him." The Levites are the servants of the priests, given to them to minister unto them. In short, in Leviticus "there is a sharp distinction drawn" between the priests and the Levites; in Deuteronomy there is no distinction whatever. All priests are Levites, and all Levites may become priests.

There is apparently no danger now, as there was in the days of Korah, of the earth opening her mouth and swallowing up a Levite who "sought the priesthood."

2. The tone of the laws in Deuteronomy, it seems to be admitted on all hands, is different from that of the laws in the previous books—being more advanced, more humane, more merciful, more spiritual.

3. Then the style of Deuteronomy differs undoubtedly from the style of the former books of the Pentateuch, in a way that gives the impression that the book is the work of a different writer, and of a somewhat different age. It is more rounded, more flowing and sustained, more cultivated, more modern—displaying, if with reverence it may be spoken, more literary art.

The diction also, though not differing much from that of the previous books, is nevertheless marked by certain frequently recurring phrases which are not to be met with in those books.

Explanations of all these discrepancies have been offered by the learned Hengstenbergs, Hävernicks, and Keils of Germany; and also by learned and able critics and commentators in this country. It cannot be said, however, that any one of these explanations is altogether satisfactory. Most of them are hypothetical or conjectural—drawn from what is probable rather than from what is known.

1. With regard to the discrepancies in the legal provisions,

A. It is argued generally that these are such as, from the nature of the case, are likely to be found in a summary of the law delivered in a short parting address. On such an oc-

casion it was only to be expected that the great lawgiver should overlook minute details and nice distinctions, and dwell only on the leading provisions.

B. It was natural also for two obvious reasons, that Moses should at the last opportunity make some alterations in the law and some additions to it.

a. After forty years' experience of their working, some modification in the laws would suggest themselves.

b. Then the entire change in the condition and circumstances of the people consequent on the approaching change from the wilderness to Canaan, would almost necessitate some corresponding changes in the laws. What suited the one condition would not suit the other.

2. A change in the *tone* of the laws was also most natural. The people were being gradually educated up to a higher moral and spiritual level, and forty years must have produced a considerable difference in their state.

3. As to style, there are two obvious reasons why the style of Deuteronomy should differ from that of the previous books, though the whole were written by Moses:

a. The style of most writers changes with age and experience, and that of Moses could hardly be the same at the close of his long career as it had been in his earlier days.

Certain improvements in the matter of ease and flow, and strict accuracy of expression were almost inevitable.

b. Farther, the solemnity of the occasion—that of Moses' final address to the people at the close of their long wanderings, and on the eve of his own death, could not fail to lend a colour and complexion to his style, imparting to it increased warmth and flow.

These reasons for a difference in the laws and in the style and tone of Moses' address, seem so natural and probable, that we are apt to take it for granted that they are, of themselves, quite sufficient to account for any apparent discrepancy or incongruity. But the critic takes nothing for granted. He examines the different books with the exact methods, and

the great and ever-growing interpretative aids of the present day; and he inquires if the apparent discrepancies are such as are likely to have been caused by the above preconceived causes. His answer, in most cases, is in the negative.

1. As to the discrepancies in the *Laws*—

A. The compression necessary in an abridgement would cause the occasional omission of details, but not the substitution of one thing for another.

Nor can it be said that any space is saved by calling

a. The priests "sons of Levi," instead of "sons of Aaron;"*

b. Or by stating the priests' portion of a peace-offering as "the shoulder, the two cheeks, and the maw" (Deut. xviii. 3), instead of as "the breast and the right leg"† (Lev. vii. 31-34);

c. Or by enacting that the people should eat the firstlings in a feast at the sanctuary (Deut. xiv. 23, xv. 20), instead of assigning them entirely to the priest (Numbers xviii. 8). Such discrepancies cannot be explained as omissions of unimportant details due to compression.

B. Neither can they be accounted for as alterations of the laws or additions thereto necessitated by the transition from the wilderness to Canaan.

a. There is nothing in the nature of the discrepant provisions to give colour to such an assumption.

b. Neither is it consonant with the tenor of the history of the legislation to expect that any changes should be made in

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* Principal Douglas argues as if the distinction between priests and Levites was a mere matter of detail—"Concerning the internal organization of the tribe" [of Levi], which Moses "did not need or care to refer to," as "all knew" it.

"Let any one," says Professor A. B. Davidson, "consider the sharp distinction drawn in the middle books, with the tragic histories connected with it, and then say, whether it is probable that a few years after no allusion to the distinction should appear in the course of a whole book."—*British and Foreign Evangelical Review, April*, 1879.

† "Right *shoulder*" in the authorised version of the Bible; but it seems to be admitted on all hands that that rendering is incorrect; and that the word (shôq) ought to be translated *leg*. The word for shoulder in the passage in Deuteronomy is admittedly the right word (zeroa). See also Numbers vi. 20.

the laws; those in the middle books as well as those in Deuteronomy were given for the use of the people when they entered Canaan; many of them, in fact, were incapable of being put in force in the Wilderness.

2. As to the different, the more humane and spiritual *tone* of Deuteronomy, this, it is maintained, can hardly be accounted for on the supposition that the interval between the writing of the books was so short, as it must have been, if they were all written in the Wilderness.

3. The difference of style again, is such as to infer not only a much greater difference of *time*, but also a difference of writer. The last chapters of Numbers date from the same place (the plains of Moab), and within a few weeks of the same time as Deuteronomy.

The style of these chapters differs as much from the style of Deuteronomy as does that of any other part of the middle books, and agrees with the latter rather than with the former. Time can have had little to do with the difference of style here.*

b. But again, it is denied that in point of fact the style of Deuteronomy does differ from the style of the middle books, as the style of an old man differs from the style of the same man when young, or as the style of the same man differs on an ordinary and on a solemn and affecting occasion. On the contrary, it differs rather as the style of one man differs from the style of another man of a different cast of mind, of a different degree of culture, and also of a different and probably a somewhat later age.

Thus, it is argued, the facts of the case do not on a patient comparison of the two law books warrant the natural presumption as to the origin of the discrepancies in the laws. It is impossible to reconcile the discrepancies on the

* The difference, not only in style, but also in diction and phraseology, is very marked in the two versions of the Law as to the cities of refuge, as given in Numbers (xxxv. 11-33) and Deuteronomy (xix. 1-14). See Professor R. Smith's *Additional Answer*, p. 22.

hypothesis that all the laws, in the two sets of books, were written down in their present form by Moses during the forty years. But once accept the hypothesis that a considerable period in the history of the nation elapsed between the writing of Deuteronomy in its present form and the issue of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers in their present form, and all difficulty disappears. There is then an obvious reason not only for a difference in the tone and provisions of the laws, but also for a difference in the style in which they are expressed. We have then simply the case of the laws being brought "down to date" by a different inspired writer, who uses his own different style. This mode of accounting for the discrepancies between the law books is not inconsistent, as will be seen, with a belief that Moses was the giver of the Deuteronomic version of the law; nay, on one hypothesis, that he delivered and wrote down that law much as we now have it.

III.—Difficulties which arise from the books which follow Deuteronomy in the canon.

The argument here falls naturally under two heads :—

I.—The books which, so far as they refer to the law as given in Deuteronomy, appear to agree with the hypothesis that Moses was the giver of that law, and delivered it much as we now have it, to Israel at the close of the forty years' wanderings.

II.—The Books which do not agree with this hypothesis, not exhibiting either the agreements or the contrasts which we naturally look for, on the supposition that the people of Israel were at the time in possession of the Deuteronomic law.

I.—The Books which agree are :—

1. The book of Joshua.
2. Some of the books of the New Testament.

I.—The book of Joshua, which is a sort of continuation of Deuteronomy, and is now generally by critics classed with

the five books of the Pentateuch (the whole being spoken of as the Hexateuch), is the book to which we naturally turn first for proof that the law which Deuteronomy represents as having been given by Moses to the people, was known and in force among the people. Such proof we do find, though it is not quite sufficiently distinct and definite, nor yet so free of doubt as to the date of the passages, as to be altogether conclusive.

Besides undoubted references and quotations, there are two important instances of agreement.

1. The first is the carrying out by Joshua (Joshua viii. 30 seq.) of the command given by Moses in Deut. xxvii., 2nd. seq., as to what the people should do when they passed over Jordan.

2. The second is the prompt and determined resistance made by the majority of the tribes of Israel, to an attempt made by the two and a-half trans-Jordanic tribes to break the most important and distinctive law of Deuteronomy—the law of the one Altar.

1.—The commandment of Moses in Deut. xxvii. embraces a great many particulars; the setting up of great stones on Mount Ebal, and plastering them; the writing upon them of "all the words of the law;" the building an altar to the Lord of "whole stones" on which no iron tool should be lifted up; the placing of six tribes on Mount Gerizim to bless the people, and six upon Mount Ebal to curse them. This command is carried out to the letter in almost every particular by Joshua,* and the reason assigned is that it was a command of Moses "written in the book of the law of Moses" (Josh. viii. 31). Joshua read on the occasion all the words of the law. "There was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not" (34-35).

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* The only material difference between the injunction and the execution lies apparently in *the stones*. Moses enjoins for the inscription of the Law the erection and plastering of "great stones" different from those of the altar. Joshua seems to inscribe the Law on the stones of the altar.

This passage is, as it stands, one of undoubted weight. It bears clear witness apparently to the existence in the time of Joshua, of a part of Deuteronomy which is quoted as the Book of the law of Moses. The natural inference is that the whole book of Deuteronomy was, at the time, in the keeping of the priests, to whom Moses in Deuteronomy is represented as having committed it; and that Joshua had it before him when he was thus carrying out its instructions to the very letter. This is the natural inference, but it does not amount to a certainty. The language is not sufficiently precise. "The Book of the Law of Moses" may have been considerably different from the present book of Deuteronomy. "The Law of Moses," which Joshua wrote "upon the stones," may have differed considerably from the present law book of Deuteronomy (v. 1., to xxvi. 16).

It may have been only the short law of Sinai (Exodus xx.-xxiii.); or even but a part of the same—little more possibly than "The ten words."

Then, it is affirmed, there is an element of uncertainty as to the date of the passage which tends to detract from its authority. The passage does not accord well with its present position in the book, and it is found in a different place in the Septuagint, and hence it has been argued that, judging from analogy, it is possibly an interpolation from Deuteronomy by a late writer; and that anyhow its authority is doubtful. The reasoning in the matter of this objection rests too much on assumption to carry conclusive weight. Besides, at whatever time the passage may have been inserted, it cannot be proved that the writer had not inspired authority for the insertion of it.

2. The only other books which appear to manifest anything approaching to a distinct agreement with Deuteronomy as to the Mosaic authorship of that book, are certain books of the New Testament.

There are two passages of Deuteronomy, each of which appears to be referred to, in two places of the New Testament—viz., Deuteronomy xxiv. 1, and Deuteronomy xviii. 15.

1. Deut. xxiv. 1., contains a precept regarding divorce—strictly speaking, forbidding re-marriage of a divorced woman with the man from whom she has been divorced. This passage seems to be cited by our Lord as Moses' permission of divorce (Matthew xix. 8). St. Mark's (x. 5) report of our Lord's words makes the citation still more distinct, for it contains the words "he (Moses) wrote you this precept."

2. Again the passage, Deuteronomy xviii. 15, "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet, from the midst of thee, of thy brethren like unto me, unto him, ye shall hearken," is quoted almost *verbatim* twice, in the book of Acts (iii. 22; vii. 37) by St. Peter and St. Stephen, as the words of Moses—"Moses truly said," &c.

Now the natural conclusion undoubtedly is that all these sacred authorities are quoting Deuteronomy as the actual composition of Moses. Yet the conclusion, though natural, is not inevitable. Setting aside the difference in the precept in Deuteronomy and that in the Gospels, and also the difference in the report of our Lord's words as given by the two Evangelists—points on which the critics lay some stress—granting in fact that our Lord and Saints Peter and Stephen quoted the passages as Moses' words, still the inference would not necessarily follow that Moses was the author of Deuteronomy as it now is. It may be that Moses wrote "that precept," but yet did not write that book; he may have delivered that prophecy, and yet, if he wrote it down at all, he may have done so in a book which has been embodied in or superseded by the present book of Deuteronomy. There is nothing unreasonable in the supposition that any publication or re-publication of the Laws of Moses might be cited in the New Testament as Moses' work. Thus, though these New Testament passages harmonise best with the theory that Moses was the actual writer of Deuteronomy, they do not actually establish that theory.

II.—The books following Deuteronomy in the canon, and which do not exhibit an agreement with it, are the historical

books, which give account of the affairs of the people from the period of their settlement in Canaan by Joshua till the time of Josiah, and also the prophetical books which date from the same period.

The difficulty is that the practice of Israel, as seen even in its leading men, its prophets, priests, judges, kings, does not accord with the precepts laid down in Deuteronomy, either in ecclesiastical or in civil matters. If the Deuteronomic law was known at all, it appears to have been almost entirely *ignored* in practice.

1. In ecclesiastical matters the chief rules laid down in Deuteronomy regarding *sacrifice*, the great act of solemn worship, the meeting point between Jehovah and his people, appear to have been almost entirely neglected. According to Deuteronomy there was to be—

a. Only one altar for the whole nation.

b. One set of sacrificing priests—the Levite priests.

In both these particulars, the Deuteronomic law was more or less ignored.

a. Instead of there being only one altar for the nation, the people continued to offer sacrifice as they had done all along at a multitude of shrines—such as Shechem, Mizpeh, Bethel, Gilgal, Hebron, Bethlehem, Beersheba, Kadesh, &c., and all this, while there was a central sanctuary at Shiloh, afterwards at Nob, and finally at Mount Zion.

b. And the offering of sacrifice, instead of being confined to the Levite priests, appears to have been practised almost indiscriminately by men of all the tribes—by kings, by leaders, by judges, by fathers of families—

By Gideon, of the tribe of Manasseh (Judges vi. 25).

By Manoah, a Danite (Judges xiii. 16-19).

By Ahithophel, the Gideonite (2 Sam. xv. 12); also,

By Absalom, by David, by Elijah, &c.

On these and other points, the critics maintain that, so far as can be judged by the *practice* of the people, including its

leading officials, the law of Deuteronomy was not known to Israel at this period—only the short code in Exodus xx.-xxiii.

Answers.

Separate answers are given by the upholders of the old views to each of the critical objections. Most of these answers, however, are purely hypothetical, based chiefly on the state of unsettlement and confusion which prevailed in Israel during great part of the period in question.

a. As to the use of a plurality of sanctuaries, Keil and writers of his school refuse to admit the alleged fact, explaining away the instances which are cited in proof—some o them as being doubtful, others as being exceptional, "justified by the appearance of an angel of God;" but Principal Douglas, one of the very latest writers on that side, does not dispute the fact, though he explains it in a way which is not altogether satisfactory. He maintains that this sacrificing at a number of the old patriarchal shrines was an irregular expedient, to which Samuel and other pious men were driven by the necessities of the times, in order to prevent the total cessation of all public worship—a temporary falling back on the old law, when the new law had, by the fall of Shiloh, and the captivity of the ark, become impracticable. It is possible that this explanation may be the true one; but it is altogether hypothetical. There is nothing in the history to afford it any distinct countenance or support. There is no indication that Samuel knew the Deuteronomic law of one sanctuary, or fancied that he was in any way contravening any law whatever by offering sacrifice at three or four different shrines. The same is true of other offerers of sacrifice. None of them betray the slightest consciousness of there being anything irregular in what they do. They offer no explanation or apology, nor is any offered for them. But further, the hypothesis does not tally with the leading facts as to time. It is by no means clear, either that the use of a plurality of altars did not begin

till after the fall of Shiloh, or that there was not after the fall of Shiloh an accessible and available chief sanctuary at Nob, to which Samuel and other good men, had they known it to be their duty, would have limited their sacrifices. This hypothesis therefore is, to say the least, by no means irrefragable.

b. As to the offering of sacrifices by men not belonging to the Levitical priesthood, the natural impression which the history leaves on the mind is that this was the case. There are two general arguments, however, which to some minds, appear sufficient to dispose of most of the cases in point.

1. When a king or a prophet is said to offer sacrifice, this may mean no more than that he did so through the regular Levitical priest. *Qui facit per alium facit per se*—Pharaoh "hanged the chief baker" (Gen. xi. 22), but not surely with his own hands. When Solomon offered a thousand burnt-offerings on the altar at Gibeon (1 Kings iii. 4), he cannot have done so with his own hands.

2. Again, the greater includes the less. Prophets like Samuel, Elijah, and even David—men inspired by God, and in continual direct communication with him—were more than priests, and were exempt from ceremonial laws which bound ordinary men. They might at any moment obtain the Almighty's direct command or permission to offer sacrifice, or perform any sacred rite. The peculiar and exceptional position of these men took their case out of the ordinary category. The Almighty can at any time dispense with His own laws.

There are of course some cases which do not come distinctly under either of the above heads, such as that of the sons of David, who are called priests (2 Sam. viii. 18), and who performed sacrifice.

Probably, however, the main defect in the evidence for the prevalence at this period of a knowledge and practice of the Deuteronomic law, lies here as under the last head, in the absence of all indication in the sacred text that there was in any of the cases referred to, the slightest departure from law or ordinary practice. It seemed a matter of course, that the

ministry of Levitical priests was not regarded as necessary, at least at the old sanctuaries.

Minor Discrepancies.

Besides these Deuteronomic rules regulating the essentials of sacrifice, there are at least other two rules bearing on sacrifice which seem to have been equally unknown to the writers and actors of the middle period.

c. There is the prohibition (Deut. xvi. 22) against the erection of a maççeba,* or sacred pillar, or stone set up like Jacob's pillar, in connection with a sanctuary, yet *Joshua* (Josh. xxiv. 26) erects such a maççeba at Shechem.

Samuel erects one between Mizpeh and Shen, and calls it his Eben-ezer (1 Sam. vii. 12). *Solomon* erected two in the porch of the temple, and named them Jachin and Boaz (1 Kings vii. 21). *Isaiah* foretells the erection of such a maççeba as a sign of the conversion of Egypt (Is. xix. 19).

d. The permission given (Deut. xii. 15) to kill and eat animals without first offering them in sacrifice. It is inferred from what Hosea says (chap. ix. 3 and 4) that that prophet had no knowledge of any such permission. Thus far as to the disagreements in these books, between the ceremonial practice of the people and the ceremonial law laid down in Deuteronomy.

Civil Affairs.

In *civil* matters the only very important disagreement regards the law of the kingdom, which appears to have been altogether unknown.

The law in Deuteronomy (chap. xvii. 14) not only sanctions the appointment of a king by the people of God, but lays down rules to regulate the appointment. Yet when, in course of time, the people demand to have a king appointed, the demand is treated as an unheard of thing, and a grievous

* Or mattsēbbah—sometimes translated *image*. Doubtless, in the new version this word will always be rendered by one and the same English word—an improvement much to be desired in regard to many other words.

insult to the majesty of Jehovah, who is regarded as the proper king of His people. The demand is so treated not only by the leaders of the people—Samuel and Gideon—but also by Jehovah himself (Judges viii. 23), "And Gideon said unto them, I will not rule over you . . . : the Lord shall rule over you." "And the Lord said unto Samuel, . . . for they have not rejected *thee*, but they have rejected *Me*, that I should not reign over them" (1 Sam. viii. 7).

Unlooked for Agreements.

Thus far as to the disagreements that are met with in the subsequent books where agreements are looked for.

The agreements that are met with, where not agreements but rather disagreements or contrasts are looked for, are the following—

1. Style—The style of Deuteronomy, instead of differing from the style of these later books, agrees wonderfully with the style of certain of them that date 700 or 800 years after, or about the time of the captivity, especially with the style of Jeremiah, and the books of Kings. It is the lofty, impressive poetical style of Jeremiah.

2. Diction and phraseology—There is a striking resemblance between the diction and phraseology of Deuteronomy and those of these books. The number of phrases and images common to both sets of books may be seen at full length (with chapter and verse) in several critical works (Davidson, Colenso).

3. Then apart from laws—The subjects on which Moses dwells by precept and prophecy and warning seem to indicate that many of the events in the history of the kingdom of Israel and Judah had already happened, and were known to the writer as facts—such as for example—

a. "The reference to the danger likely to arise to the state from the king multiplying to himself 'wives' and 'silver and gold' and 'horses.'" This warning, it is thought, was suggested by the case of Solomon.

b. The reference to "the worship of the sun and moon and the host of heaven." This again is believed to have been suggested by the idolatries of Manasseh's reign.

c. Then Deuteronomy iv. 25-28, is thought too distinct a reference to the captivity of the ten tribes to have been written before that event. The ten tribes were then "scattered among the nations, and left few in number among the heathen," &c.

EXPLANATIONS.

These alleged agreements are thus explained by the critics on the other side.

a and *b.* The agreement between the style, diction, and phraseology of Jeremiah and Deuteronomy arises merely from *imitation.* The book of Deuteronomy had been rescued from its long neglect by Hilkiah, when Jeremiah was a comparatively young man. It doubtless made a great impression upon him, as it did upon others, and nothing was more natural than that he should seek to form his style in every way upon such an excellent model.

c. As to the apparent reference to events in the history of the kingdoms, they are simply *prophecies.* Moses, as an inspired prophet, saw into the future, and knew what transgressions the people would fall into, and warned them beforehand of the consequences.

REJOINDERS.

a b. To these answers, the critics rejoin that if Jeremiah was so great an imitator of Deuteronomy, it is strange that he makes no direct reference to the book—a fact which, however, would be very natural on the supposition that he was *himself* the writer of it.

c. As to the explanation of the historical allusions by prophecy, it is maintained that it is contrary to prophetic practice to predict with any circumstantiality of detail things which are yet in the womb of the far future.

"A prophecy springs out of, or directs itself to meet the circumstances of the time."

Part Second—THE THEORIES.

If the above presentment of the apparent discrepancies between Deuteronomy and the foregoing and following books is sufficiently correct and clear, it will be admitted that the Deuteronomic question is, at least, one of great difficulty and complexity—a question which demands for its solution not only great learning and great critical acumen, long and patient investigation, research and study, but also a candid and judicial mind, and a reverent and believing spirit. Much has been done of late, and more, it is plain, will be done in the near future, to press the question towards a solution. Various theories for the reconciliation of the discrepancies have been suggested; some involving much, some comparatively little departure from the old belief as to the Mosaic authorship, but yet none of them altogether satisfactory, or quite free from great difficulties of their own. The theory which first suggests itself to an earnest and reverent mind, which is convinced of the reality of the alleged discrepancies, is what may be termed—

1. The *interpolation* theory. This theory assumes that Moses is the original author of Deuteronomy, and also of the other four books of the Pentateuch, yet the books have undergone many and great alterations since they left his hand; other inspired men having at different times introduced additions and modifications of the laws, to adapt them to changed times. This theory has been suggested frequently, and by men of very different schools.

In his History of the Jews (p. xxvii.), Dean Milman states, as the second of "two theories, between which range all the conclusions, of what may be called the Critical School," "That the Pentateuch, even in its present form, is of very high antiquity, as high as the time of Moses, but that it has undergone many interpolations, some additions, and much modification, extending to the language in successive ages."

"It is by no means unlikely, that there are insertions of a later date, which were written or sanctioned by the prophets and holy men, who, after the captivity, arranged and edited the Scriptures of the Old Testament" (Speaker's Commentary, I., p. 494).

This theory appears also to be suggested in recent publications by two learned Principals of Free Church Colleges, who have had the Deuteronomic question forced upon their attention. In his pamphlet ("Why I still believe that Moses wrote Deuteronomy?" p. 5), Principal Douglas says—"Nor shall I take up any extreme view, nor deny that there may perhaps have been considerable editing of the work of Moses, however far I am from being convinced of this by any evidence that I have seen. Nor shall I deny the possibility of the Mosaic laws having been given orally, between the Exodus and the conquest of Canaan, and yet having remained for the most part unwritten, till ages afterwards." Principal Rainy says ("The Bible and Criticism," p. 145)—"You have heard of discussions about the date and authorship of Deuteronomy, now, if you exclude the idea of re-editing, I do not see how the evidence of a late date and authorship of Deuteronomy can be resisted."

This remark the Principal means evidently to apply to the central or legal part of the book; for he says further (p. 146), "Those who think it important to defend the Mosaic origin of the main substance of Deuteronomy, cannot exclude the idea of later editing."

This theory has probably been seldom carried beyond the stage of suggestion, and some of those who suggest it (Principal Douglas for instance), would apparently shrink from admitting its applicability to the explanation of any particular discrepancies. It is difficult to see, as Dr. Rainy says, how interpolation can be denied, except by the admission of the much more radical alternative of late authorship. Interpolation must, in fact, form part of any adequate theory that may be devised; but of itself, interpolation cannot explain

some of the difficulties, such as the discrepancy between the style of Deuteronomy and that of the foregoing books, and the discrepancy between the *precepts* of Deuteronomy and the *practice* of the following books. The theory of interpolation may, however, be supplemented by what may be called—

2. The *late Codification* theory, generally known as the theory of Delitzsch, though in substance it was suggested two hundred years ago by Witsius.*

This theory entirely explains the diversity of style and the discrepancy in law between Deuteronomy and the following books. It assumes that Moses spoke and wrote down the Deuteronomic law, as in Deuteronomy he is represented to have done, but maintains that he did not write down the law as given in the foregoing books, having only delivered it orally to the priests, who, as several passages show (Deut. xvii. 11, xxiv. 8, xxxiii. 10; Lev. x. 11, xv. 31), were bound to keep up and communicate to the people a knowledge of the law. The priests either committed the laws to memory,† or took notes of them. In whatever way the laws were preserved, however, they were not fully written out, or reduced to a system, or "codified," till some time after the people were settled in Canaan—perhaps "ages after." Before the time for codification came, a number of changes may have been made in the laws by divine authority; and thus there is shown a probable cause for the difference both of style and of law between Deuteronomy and the previous books.

There are two facts which lend great probability to the chief assumption on which this theory rests, viz., that Moses did not himself write the law in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers.

1. In the text of these books Moses is only said to have

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* Hermann Wits, professor of divinity in succession at Franeker, Utrecht, and Leyden—born, 1636—died, 1708.

† The Samaritans of the present day can recite the whole of the Pentateuch from memory.

written small specified portions of them (Ex. xxiv. 4-7, xxxiv. 27, xvii. 14; Num. xxxiii. 2).

2. The very fact of his delivering to the people and writing down the law in considerable detail on the eve of his death, seems to imply that he had not written it down before.

The only serious difficulties which this theory does not account for, are the discrepancies between Deuteronomy and the subsequent books, viz., the want of agreement between the practice of the people and the precepts of Deuteronomy, and the want of contrast between the style of Deuteronomy and that of the subsequent books. Here is, no doubt, a considerable defect in the theory, for these discrepancies with the later books, though of a negative rather than of a positive character, are yet regarded as of even greater weight than the discrepancies with the earlier books, being of a more pervading and comprehensive nature, more deeply-seated, and less likely to be the result of mere accident.* The two sets of discrepancies pointing in the same direction, the latter set is regarded as corroborative of the former; and the united witness of the two is held by a large proportion of critics to be conclusive as to the *late composition and authorship of Deuteronomy.* This conclusion it is admitted is at first sight undoubtedly startling and unsettling. The non-Mosaic authorship of Deuteronomy is a very different thing from the non-Mosaic authorship of any of the other four books of the Pentateuch. To deny that Moses is the author of a book, great part of which consists professedly of *verbatim* reports of Moses' speeches, written down by Moses himself, is apparently to offer a flat contradiction to the plain testimony of the book itself.

It is maintained, however, that this difficulty is, in reality,

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* Professor A. B. Davidson, New College, Edinburgh, speaking of the two sets of discrepancies, calls the latter set "constitutional;" while the former set, though great, are "superficial—although they may be considered symptomatic of a general condition of the system, like an outbreak on the skin."—*British and Foreign Evangelical Review, April*, 1879.

much less serious than at first sight it appears, and that in judging of it, we are too apt to be misled by our modern notions and traditional prejudices. The difficulty is capable, it is argued, of an explanation which is in no way derogatory to the authority or the inspiration of Scripture. The mode of this explanation constitutes—

3. The *literary expedient*, or *literary fiction* theory. According to this theory, the chief part of Deuteronomy is put into the mouth of Moses—not because Moses actually spoke or wrote it, but because the laws are substantially the laws of Moses—laws for which "Moses left the materials;" and which it was expedient to continue to publish under the name of Moses. Some prophet (probably Jeremiah) was commissioned by the Almighty to prepare this new edition; and of course he was authorised and instructed to make certain alterations in the laws to adapt them to the changed times. Now ancient writers, in expounding a man's ideas or principles, naturally threw their exposition into the form of a speech delivered by the man himself. Hence the many eloquent speeches in Livy and other ancient historians, which are plainly the composition of the historian himself, no report having ever been preserved of them.

Again, ancient writers had no idea of the modern expedients of notes and appendices; and hence an editor simply interwove his corrections and additions with the text of his author, just as the author would have done had he re-published his work himself.

Thus the modern prophet or editor re-cast the laws of Moses much as Moses himself would have re-cast them, had it fallen to him to publish a new edition of them during his own lifetime; and the editor wrote them in Moses' name, both because Moses was, under God, the real author of the laws, and because Moses' name would carry greater weight than his own. With the exception, in short, of the use of the first person, or the form of direct speech, the supposed late editor of Moses acted exactly as the editor of a text book of

science at the present day does, correcting and adding to the work, but not changing its title. An exact parallel of this use of the speech form is not indeed to be found in other parts of Scripture. The nearest approach to it is St. Paul's speech before King Agrippa, giving an account of his conversion, in which he "represents a series of revelations as having happened at one time and place," including his mission to the Gentiles, which was not given till three years after his conversion. No one will suppose that St. Paul had here the slightest idea of deceiving or misleading his hearers. He thought only of setting before them as rapidly and forcibly as possible the leading events of his miraculous career. He gave them the whole substance of the truth, with, for the sake of convenience, a slight departure from the form. Thus, it is argued, the late editor of Moses deviated from the form of strict truth in putting the new edition of the laws into Moses' mouth; but the substance of his work was as true as if Moses himself had spoken and written it. If we have difficulty in accepting this view, it is because we are "guilty of the mistaken practice of taking our modern notions of literary form and propriety, and thrusting them back into the simplicity of early times." *

No doubt there is much force in this reasoning. Yet this theory is so opposed to our modern notions of fitness and propriety, that only the most rigorous and conclusive demonstration of its truth will ever secure for it general acceptance by the Church. Its advocates, however, maintain that the

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* When the science of Biblical criticism was in its cradle, two centuries ago, and speculations about the ideal character of the Book of Job began to be circulated, alarm was excited. When it was suggested that the events narrated in the prologue never happened, and did not happen in the ideal way they are recorded, and that the speeches were never spoken, it was thought that revelation was endangered, and so self-possessed a theologian as F. Spanheim, in his "Historia Jobi," was driven to meet the new views with the inexorable principle, *Nisi Historia sit, fraus scriptoris.* Whatever seems history, and is not, can only be the fraud of the writer. We are beyond this in Job, though at the same point still elsewhere.—*Prof. A. B. Davidson.*

only difficulty connected with the theory is this initial one. Once admit, say they, the possibility of a new edition of Moses' law having been published hundreds of years after Moses' death by an inspired editor writing under Moses' name, and all other difficulties attaching to the book are explained at once —interpolations in narrative, discrepancies in laws, diversity of style, incongruity of practice, everything becomes plain.

The above three theories appear to embrace and cover all the leading suggestions which have been made on the subject, and each of the three can claim not only able and learned, but also apparently sound, pious, and reverent supporters—men who appear to be actuated by an ardent love for truth in general, and Bible truth in particular; and also possessed by a constraining desire to see the Book of God entirely set free from all obstacles which hinder its full and complete acceptance by men of every degree of culture in this age of ever-growing intelligence, ever-quickening thought, and restless inquiry.

In the opinion of the writer the time is not yet come for pronouncing with any confidence on the comparative merits and claims of these three theories, far less for deciding that any one of them supplies a full and adequate explanation for all the complex facts.

1. It may, however, be safely assumed that the first or *Interpolation* theory will never be generally accepted as entirely adequate by itself.

2. The late *Codification* theory of Delitzsch, as accounting for a large proportion of the facts without any startling assumptions or bewildering reversal of established beliefs, commends itself naturally to all candid and earnest men who have weighed carefully the difficulties of the question. To see this theory established by irrefragable proofs would afford undoubted satisfaction to many anxious inquiring minds.

It must not be concealed, however, that the third or *literary expedient* theory is by far the more popular amongst critics. The more advanced amongst them—all, without doubt, men

of great learning and ability—regard this theory, in fact, as a settled point—"one of the most certain conclusions of modern Biblical criticism."*

But not to mention the objectionable assumptions on which many of them proceed—the more advanced of the advanced critics enlarge greatly the scope of the argument. With them the Deuteronomic question becomes merged in the general question of the origin of the whole historical books. The writer of Deuteronomy, according to these authorities, was only one of at least four or five writers, who at different periods, as original writers or as supplementers, took part in the composition of the historical books, and he, like the others, can be tracked by peculiarities of style, diction, and phraseology through most of the books, from the commencement till near the period of the captivity.

This theory is of a more sweeping character than any of those which have been framed for the solution of the mere Deuteronomic difficulty; but, in reality it cannot be said to involve much if any additional difficulty. It is of comparatively small importance to what author or authors we are,

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* Ueber den Ursprung des Deuteronomiums herrscht noch weniger Zweifel; in allen Kreisen, wo überhaupt auf Anerkennung wissenschaftlicher Resultate zu rechnen ist wird anerkannt dass es in der Zeit verfasst ist, in der es entdeckt und der Reformation des Königs Josia zu Grunde gelegt wurde.—*Wellhausen—Geschichte Israels*, I., *Einleitung*, p. 9.

It certainly cannot be charged upon *Wellhausen*, himself—the most recent, and perhaps the most advanced of German critics—that he is backward in admitting "scientific results." He makes the whole minute and complicated ritual system of Israel, as contained in the books of the Pentateuch, a product of evolution—developed gradually in three marked stages—the last and most exclusive not being completed till after the captivity. His view does not apparently differ materially from that of Kuenen, Colenso, Kalisch, and others.

These critics undoubtedly overvalue human science, and tend to reduce the Bible to a mere "evolution of human thought." But nothing will ever be accomplished against such critics, by men who manifestly *undervalue* human science, and go on obstinately ignoring its demonstrated results; refusing, to use the words of the *Quarterly Reviewer*, to admit "the real magnitude of difficulties which their school has been in the habit of glossing over, with conventional but inadequate explanations."

under the guidance of the Spirit, indebted for the composition of those books which claim for themselves no particular author, one inspired writer being, for purposes of revelation, as good as another. Then as to the composite nature of the books—the alleged fact that different parts have been written by different prophets and at different times—this fact, keeping inspiration in view, can in no wise detract from the authority of the books; while it helps greatly to explain apparent anomalies and contradictions. In short, it is rather in its wider divergence from traditional belief, than in any necessary consequences which are involved in it, that the alarming feature of this theory consists.

It is a theory, nevertheless, which will never be generally accepted without the most complete and rigorous demonstration, should such be possible. The means are being rapidly accumulated for enabling even moderately equipped scholars to judge of the truth or falsehood of it. In the works of several living critics the text of the whole, or almost the whole, of the historical books is to be found regularly mapped out; the sections which belong to each of the supposed different writers being indicated to a verse or part of a verse, and words and phrases which characterise each of the different writers noted and numbered.

In short, there is a complete critical analysis of the text of each book, and a statement of the relation of each of its parts to the corresponding parts of the other books, the whole being accompanied by a literal translation of the text, which makes manifest the peculiar style and diction of each section, thus enabling even the mere English reader to attain to a pretty correct estimate of the scope and force of the argument.

Such is the present position of the general question as to the origin of the whole of the historical books. The particular question as to the origin of Deuteronomy is manifestly so bound up with the general question as to be incapable of a complete or satisfactory solution apart from it. Till it can be proved or shown to be incapable of proof that the historica

books are all or almost all more or less the work of different sacred scribes, writing at different times, the true state of the case as to Deuteronomy cannot be said to be placed beyond doubt.

The complexity or non-complexity of the early historical books forms in fact the great Biblical problem of the day. It is a problem, which, from the interest it excites and the number of able and learned critics who have devoted themselves to the exposition of it, is pretty certain, in no long time, to be settled somehow to the satisfaction of the scientific world, whose conclusions will in the end infallibly be accepted by the whole community.

Part Third—TREATMENT OF THEORIES AND THEORISTS.

Such being the theories, what treatment is due to the theories and the theorists by the Church, or by the different branches of the Church? Surely a solemn and positive duty is laid upon every Church to give willing and active aid in the investigation of this great question—neither permitting it, so to speak, to *drift*, nor yet attempting to anchor it to the irrevocable past, but taking the lead and guidance in the free discussion of the whole subject, and positively encouraging pious and reverent scholars to sift every doubtful matter to the bottom, and frankly and fearlessly set before the Church the results of their researches whatever they may be.

Now it appears to the writer, that the course which the Church has actually taken has been about the direct reverse of this, through its authoritative mouthpieces.

1. The Church, speaking generally, has either discouraged all investigation of the critical question, on the ground that there was really no question at all at issue, the pretended critical difficulties being "but a repetition of old and *often answered* cavils,"* springing from a sceptical and rationalistic spirit.

2. Or it has, in essaying to answer the critical questions evaded all the real difficulties, grappling only with secondary and subordinate points.

1. The fact of the almost entire ignoring by theologians of the alleged results of Biblical research within comparatively recent times, will not probably be denied by any one who is moderately well acquainted with recent Church history. The fact, and the consequences of the fact, have been made very painfully manifest at three or four different periods, by the occurrence of a sort of panic in the religious world, on the publication of a rather advanced critical work, such as "Essays and Reviews;" Bishop Colenso's

* Bishop Wilberforce (then of Oxford).

work on the Pentateuch; Professor Robertson Smith's articles in the Encyclopaedia Britannica. Some of these works were, it may be said, in some respects, highly objectionable, decidedly rationalistic, not taking due account of the supernatural and prophetical elements in Scripture, and generally treating the sacred books with scant reverence and respect. However true this may be, not one of those publications would probably have caused the slightest panic, had the minds of the clergy been duly prepared for its reception, by a competent knowledge of the nature and progress of modern Biblical criticism. Had they known the critical *pros* and *cons*, they would have taken a calm and intelligent view of the conclusions laid before them, distinguishing between what was well-founded and what was ill-founded, and bringing forward perhaps more than one probable explanation of the alleged difficulties. Having been, however, invariably taught on the contrary, to regard all the new Biblical views as so much unmitigated rationalism—every departure from the traditional views as to the composition and authorship of the sacred books being unsound, unfounded, and dangerous, and long ago proved to be so, by departed champions of the truth—what could they do when a sudden and unexpected attack fell on their views?—what, but fall into confusion, and make "rash and ill-advised" assertions; taking up the old attitude of indiscriminate denial and denunciation! Eighteen years ago this was, with probably only one single exception, the course taken by the English Bishops, with the Archbishop of Canterbury, and Bishop Wilberforce at their head. All the critical arguments of any importance, it was affirmed, had been answered and refuted by former Apologists—"by Archbishop Ussher, more recently by Bishop Watson."* A few years afterwards

* Much the same language is held even now by men whose reading on the subject has stood still. An English gentleman, who visited the North of Scotland last autumn, wrote to the *Aberdeen Free Press*, stating that he had been greatly interested in the local controversy regarding Deuteronomy, but that he felt

Bishop Wilberforce came to see—what probably most intelligent laymen saw at the time—the futility of thus looking to pre-scientific commentators for answers to scientific critics; and confessed that the old answers were as useless against the new arguments, as smooth-bores against needle-guns.*

No doubt there were, as there still are, theologians and commentators who went on denying indiscriminately every new critical conclusion; nay, maintaining that the grounds

convinced that all Professor Smith's arguments and objections had been answered beforehand by Dean Graves, whose lectures on the Pentateuch he, himself, had first read about fifty years before. He advised the disputants, on both sides, to read Dean Graves. Graves' Lectures were published in 1807. It is needless to say that at that time the more recondite arguments in support of the theory of a late date of Deuteronomy, which have been so much developed by recent research, had been merely indicated. The works of Geddes and De Wette had been published before the lectures came out, and some notice is taken of them in the Appendix. The notice, however, is slight and superficial particularly as regards De Wette, of whose work Graves knew nothing more than what he had gathered from a notice of it in the *Critical Review*. Graves never seems to have pursued the subject any further. See the 4th edition of the Lectures published in 1831, two years after his death. The more obvious Deuteronomic difficulties Graves treated in a discriminating way—holding that four passages were interpolations, or "explanatory additions by a later hand." It need hardly be added that Ussher and Watson, prior in time to Graves, (this year forms the three hundredth anniversary of Ussher's birth!) knew even less of the deep-seated difficulties than he did.

* In his address at the Southampton Church Congress (1870) —"The ever changing play of life gives such a new colour to old difficulties, that old answers will no more meet new objections, than old fire-arms will meet modern battles."

Since the above was written, there has appeared a volume of the Life of Bishop Wilberforce. The brilliant prelate, as therein delineated, appears the very last man in the world to deal effectually with new and difficult Biblical problems, demanding for their solution, deep learning, patient investigation, and calm reflection. He seems, during his whole Episcopate, to have been over head and ears in administrative activities—hurrying from place to place, and "habitually *forcing*" into the twelve working hours of the day, "the work of eighteen, if not of four-and-twenty;" and having nothing but the merest snatches of time for reading, or reflection of any sort. Then the very brilliancy of his rhetoric—the readiness with which, from the fertile soil of his own mind, he could bring up plausible arguments, clothed in beautiful language, in support of any view of any question, concealed from himself and his hearers, or readers, any defects there might be in the foundations of his reasoning.—*See Quarterly Review*, January, 1880.

on which the critical arguments were based, not only did not prove the critic's case, but proved, in fact, the direct reverse.*

2. But it soon became plain that if the critical argument was to be shaken at all in the minds of intelligent and unbiassed Christian men, it must be met, not by the denials and denunciations of busy divines and dignitaries, relying chiefly on obsolete and comparatively uncritical authorities, but by scholars familiar with the most recent results of scientific investigation and research—orthodox critics occupying the same high level of scholarship as the critics, whose conclusions it was their business to rebut. Hence the publication called the "Speaker's Commentary," a book which may be said not only to have the *imprimatur* of the Church of England, but to have been planned and executed under the authority and supervision of that Church. The idea of this work is excellent, and in some respects the execution is equally so. On the whole, as a commentary, it is much superior to any previous work of the sort in the English language. In future editions it will doubtless eventually attain to the accomplishment of its great object of furnishing, as far as possible, an answer to all objections and difficulties. But as yet its chief writers have never seriously addressed themselves to that great task. In the opinion alike of friendly reviewer,† and of antagonistic

* See, for instance, "The Pentateuch and its Anatomists" (Birks), 1869.

† See a review of the "Speaker's Commentary" in the *Quarterly Review* for April, 1879. The reviewer manifests throughout a very reverent and conservative spirit, and he touches with great delicacy and tenderness on the defects of the commentary. Yet he makes his opinion of it sufficiently clear. He thinks the commentary, on the whole, not up to "the level of modern scholarship," and says in effect that the writers in it have laboured to shut out from its pages as much as possible the results of modern scientific research. In regard to the "astonishing" assumptions with which it is attempted to "stifle discussion" regarding the authorship of Deuteronomy, he speaks very decidedly indeed. "It may be imagined how the Bishop [Thirlwall] would have characterised the quotation of the text, 'The law was given by Moses,' as helping to prove that Moses *wrote the narrative* of the delivery of the law, and indeed the whole Pentateuch (see I. 14), and what he would have thought of the astonishing statement with which Mr. Espin closes his Introduction to Deuteronomy, to the

critic, they have *evaded* rather than grappled with all the great Biblical problems. Where they have discussed these problems at all with any fulness, it has been rather as advocates of the old views than as dispassionate judges between the old and the new, "barring out" the latter "at all hazards." Certainly the purely literary and historical questions as to the origin of the early books, and especially of Deuteronomy, are treated in a most superficial and disappointing way. The commentator sometimes passes over important branches of the evidence on the subject in silence,* or he disposes of them with what appears to the writer as a very superficial and inconclusive notice, assuming the whole point in dispute, or declining to "enter on" the full discussion of it, on some unsatisfactory plea, such as want of space, or because there is no agreement on the point between the critics themselves—the one contradicting and answering the other—or because some orthodox writer to whom he refers has published an "unanswerable" work on the subject.

In short, the very conservative writers of this commentary have carried their reasonable caution against the admission of new views to an unreasonable length, and have thereby, to a great extent, defeated their own excellent purpose, and lost a golden opportunity of guiding ecclesiastical opinion in a difficult crisis.

2. Instead of guiding, they have probably to no small extent misled opinion. Had the English panic been met in a bolder and fairer, a more straightforward and discriminating

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effect, that this book has the attestation of the Lord to its Mosaic authorship, to question which is 'to impeach the perfection and sinlessness of His nature, and seems thus to gainsay the first principles of Christianity.'"—(I.—800).

* Another and more recent Commentary—Blunt's Annotated Bible (1878-9)—ignores it seems the critical theories still more decidedly. "In describing the contents of Deuteronomy, he speaks as though Bishop Colenso and those he imitated had never existed."—*Sat. Review*, 1242, p. 212. And "even in a commentary designed for family use, it seems strange to find but one poor footnote about theories once so rife . . . asserting the composite character of the most venerable book (Genesis)."—*Ibid.*

way, there would have probably been no Scotch panic. Had the English apologists, in discussing the views of Bishop Colenso and those of the writers of "Essays and Reviews," drawn a clear line between the literary and historical, and the merely rationalistic objections—between arguments drawn from similarity of style, diction, and phraseology, or from contrariety of law, custom, or fact on the one side, and arguments on the other side, based on such assumptions as that a miracle is necessarily "unhistorical," and a prophecy merely a bit of history—*vaticinatio post eventum;* had they thus put the true state of the critical argument before the ecclesiastical public, exaggerating nothing, extenuating nothing, assuming nothing, they would have done the Church at large a most needful and seasonable service. They would have forewarned and thereby forearmed it. They would have prepared the clergy of all denominations, and in both ends of the island, for the possible, nay the probable rise—not in Germany, or in Holland, or in South Africa, but in their own midst—of a more discriminating and therefore a more formidable opponent of the traditional view of the origin of the early Scripture books—one denying the strict Mosaic authorship of Deuteronomy; but yet not denying the inspiration or the historic truth of Deuteronomy or of any of the other books—a critic, in fact, making no unsound or unwarrantable assumptions, and who must therefore, be met and confronted solely by argument and scholarship.

Such a critic has arisen in the person of Professor Robertson Smith, of the Free Church College, Aberdeen—a scholar who in learning, ability, and thorough mastery of his subject may take rank with the most eminent critics of Germany.

It is not necessary to enter upon the merits of Professor Smith's case, which is still *sub judice,* to show that it is precisely such a case as has been supposed—a case of startling revolt against intolerant and undiscriminating traditionalism, by a critic of apparently unimpeachable orthodoxy, judged by the standards of his Church.

Such a case was certain to arise sooner or later within some Church in this country; and it was equally certain, when it did arise, to operate like a night attack upon a camp, throwing the Church into a state of alarm and confusion incompatible with deliberate thought, and judicial action.

On this occasion certainly it seemed that the great majority of those to whom it fell to deal with the case in the Supreme Court* were, at first, altogether unprepared to take a calm and judicial view of it. They appeared anxious to hurry it to a decision and a condemnation at once, and very few of them seemed to have an adequate idea of the great difficulty and complexity of the momentous critical questions at issue, and the formidable array of arguments and authorities which could be marshalled in support of the impugned theory. The delays, however, caused by the observance of legal forms, giving time for reflection and study, the enforced attention to both sides of every question, and the necessity for careful statement and wary reasoning in coming to close quarters with such a master of fence as Professor Smith; these and other concurring causes gradually produced a manifest and powerful effect. The great difficulties which beset the whole subject making the choice of theories, with our present lights, only a choice of perplexities, were doubtless now, for the first time, brought home to many earnest and candid minds.

Men—especially men in advanced life—who were naturally repelled by every theory, save the old accepted traditional one, realised now, in all its gravity, the great responsibility which would attach to an authoritative proscription, at this stage of investigation, and in face of the highest critical authority, of any theory, which claimed to explain the facts, without absolute and manifest contradiction to Scripture. They saw that only absolute necessity could justify the shutting up of a door, which left a needful opening to even

* The subject of Professor Smith's Biblical articles was first brought before "The College Committee;" but that body gave its voice against prosecution.

a single faithful soul; a door which the progress of investigation might, after all, prove to be the only true one.

Hence, as the case proceeded, opposition relaxed, and a more judicial tone, and more tolerant spirit prevailed in the courts. The change is clearly traceable in the course of the procedure, step by step. It is seen in the protracted duration of the case; in the gradually dwindling majorities against the Professor; in the abandonment, one after another, of all the charges but one; and finally, in the difficulty, not yet apparently altogether surmounted, of coming to an agreement as to the relevancy of even that one charge.

No doubt, upon the whole, considering all the circumstances, the conduct of the case has been creditable to the Free Church Courts, the clerical members of which appear to be exceptionally well qualified, by their careful training in Hebrew and in Biblical criticism, for forming an intelligent opinion of the merits of such a case, when properly set before them.*

No doubt, also, in spite of temporary excitement, unsettlement, and dissension, the case will eventually do more good than evil. It will help to "clear the air."

Whatever the legal and formal issue of it may be, the indirect result will undoubtedly be, to open up to a great extent, all these Biblical questions to the light; dispelling a mass of dangerously narrow and exclusive views, liable at any moment, if stirred up, to cause another such panic. In short, the case can hardly fail to contribute largely to the very needful work of placing the whole subject of Biblical criticism in this country on a sounder and more solid basis.

The evil in this, as in other matters of a like sort, will undoubtedly be over-ruled by Providence for good.

But the question naturally arises, is it not possible, at once, to put criticism on the soundest and safest basis, and cut away all occasion for these ever-recurring alarms and unsettlements. Would not full and free discussion—bold and fearless facing of the question be as wise a policy in this difficulty,

* See the *Catholic Presbyterian*, November, 1879, p. 364.

as it would have been in the astronomical, the geological, and the biological difficulties? Would it not be the policy of faith, as well as that of wisdom and prudence?—the surest way to allay and avert dangerous excitements; to manifest just confidence in the Scriptures, and to guard the Church against rashly committing itself to an untenable position? Not indeed that there is much, if any risk, that the Church (speaking generally) will ever commit itself to a narrow view of a question of this sort, by a regular authoritative decision. Certainly no branch of the Church in England or in the Colonies will do so. It is by the *quasi*-authoritative and semi-official acts of her leading ecclesiastics that the English Church has been, and is only too likely to be committed in the eyes of the world. The Speaker's Commentary carries the moral weight of the chief Clergy and Divinity Professors of the English Church.* On the question of the date and authorship of Deuteronomy, this Commentary conveys the idea, that only *one theory* is consistent with the truth of Scripture, and tenable within the Church. Consider what would be the consequence of such teaching, should the advancing tide of criticism render this one theory no longer tenable —or consider its possible consequences even now on an intelligent reader, who has not studied the question for himself, and has to trust to this Commentary entirely for his guidance in critical exposition. Suppose him relying in full trust on the assumptions of Mr. Espin and Bishop Harold Browne,† that the theory that Deuteronomy was not written

* "The plan of the work has been settled, and the writers have been appointed under the sanction of a Committee, consisting of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Archbishop of York, the Bishop of London, the Bishop of Llandaff, the Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol, the Bishop of Chester, &c., &c." And the general editor "has been advised by a small Committee, consisting of the Archbishop of York, and the Regius Professors of Divinity of Oxford and Cambridge, 'upon questions arising during the progress of the work.'"—*Advertisement.*

† Dr. Harold Browne has, during the Biblical controversies of the last twenty years, frequently set a much-needed example of calm and courteous

by Moses, but by a later prophet, necessarily implies that Deuteronomy is a "forgery," and seems to "gainsay the first principles of Christianity." Suppose him then to meet, as he any day may do, in a trustworthy publication, the statement that the majority of eminent critics are agreed that Deuteronomy was *not* written by Moses but by a later prophet, what conclusion is he likely to form on the subject?

Putting the two statements together, is it not very possible that he may conclude that Deuteronomy *is* a "forgery," and that this fact saps "the first principles of Christianity?" On the principle that "cuique in arte suâ credendum" is he not fully as likely to trust the eminent critics as the mere commentators—that is, the experts rather than the amateurs in critical science? Surely in a work professing to represent the mind of the Church, and not that of a mere narrow sect or party, all feasible and tenable theories on such a most complex and difficult subject should be fairly stated and expounded with all their *pros* and *cons*. It should be made plain that the Church has never yet committed itself to any one theory, and that every Christian man is free to adopt any theory which to his mind appears most satisfactorily to explain the facts; so long of course as he does not deny or contravene any article of the Church's teaching regarding Scripture.

Surely this is the safest and wisest course under any circumstances. Even were the balance of critical authority

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reasoning. He would have done a great service to English Biblical criticism had he set the yet more needed example of carefully distinguishing between sound and unsound critical positions. Labouring, however, as he has almost invariably done, to prove the critics to be *wrong in everything*, he has frequently employed a style of reasoning which can only damage his own cause. In two or three instances, in his zeal to prove a critic wrong when he was perfectly right, he has fallen into errors, which betray almost inconceivable carelessness or ignorance, and which the critics have not failed to turn to the utmost account in casting discredit on his authority. See his *Elohistic Psalms*, p. 26, for his opinion regarding the 600,000 warriors of Israel; and the "Speaker's Commentary," I. 6, for his yet more unaccountable blunder regarding the passage in 1 Samuel, which seems to prove a difference between the Tabernacle in the Wilderness and the Tabernacle at Shiloh.

not against but in favour of the traditional theory, would it not, while the question is still undecided, be safer not only to tolerate but even to encourage competing theories? However strong his position may be the wise general always takes care to have a line of retreat open. He takes nothing for granted, but prepares for all contingencies. He does not wantonly "burn his boats and bridges."

Certainly a very grave responsibility attaches to the words of a commentator who, without any necessity laid upon him, stakes the truth of Scripture and the authority of the Church on a single much controverted theory.

The writer has often been greatly pained and shocked by the assumptions of extreme rationalists; he is only one degree less pained and alarmed by such an assumption as this on the part of the orthodox.

A Suggestion.

It has frequently occurred to the writer that a most desirable scheme for bringing about a sounder and soberer state of the ecclesiastical mind on this subject—for circumscribing the limits of controversy, for silencing extreme theorists on either side, and generally reducing the questions to their true dimensions—would be to endeavour to procure a deliberate opinion on the chief controverted points from such a body of experts as the Committee for the Revision of the Old Testament Scriptures. An opinion from the actual Committee which has gone over line by line the whole of the original text of those books, in correspondence with the most eminent critics of the Continent and of America, could not but carry great weight with every intelligent Christian. It would at least command respect. Those who could not accept the opinion would yet feel that it could not be easily or lightly disposed of—could not be set aside or evaded by an assumption, an assertion, or an epithet, but must be met by calm, careful, and circumspect reasoning. Some questions, the

opinion, if unanimous and expressed with decision, might set at rest altogether and at once. Other questions, though leaving undecided, it might yet advance a stage towards solution by indicating distinctly the key of the position—the points on which the solution hinged, and to the elucidation of which critics should alone address themselves.

Certain other questions it might pronounce incapable of solution on any *data* now accessible.

Thus in various ways the opinion of the Revisers would tend to narrow the field of controversy. It would also almost infallibly moderate the tone and language of controversialists; the combined authority of such a body of experts imposing restraint on the utterances of even the most confident theorists on either side. Thus might the Revisers crown their main work of revision with an additional service, which to many earnest and intelligent Christians would greatly enhance its interest and value. Bible readers would look forward with double interest and expectation to the issue of a new version of the Old Testament if they were to receive along with it* a key to these perplexing preliminary difficulties.

Conclusion.

The writer concludes with a summary of his argument in the shape of a few rules for the guidance of a student of these important Biblical problems. The rules are in fact those by which he himself has sought to be guided in his own investi-

* It is not meant of course that the Revisers' explanation should be bound up with the Bible. The writer is convinced that many readers of all classes in this country would read such a learned and authoritative explanation with profit as well as with pleasure. He was much struck by an instance of eager desire to obtain information on the question, which came under his notice soon after the commencement of the Smith case. He overheard an excellent and pious woman saying to a neighbour, reverently dropping her voice at the time—"I canna understan' what they're makin' sic a wark about Deuteronomy for. I took doon my Bible the other nicht when they were a' to bed and read Deuteronomy from beginnin' to end. I saw naething wrang wi' Deuteronomy."

gations, and he humbly recommends them to the consideration of the reader:—

1. Beware of taking up an attitude of blind and undiscriminating opposition to any critical theory on the subject of the authorship, composition, or date of the books of Scripture, merely because such theory is opposed to the traditional belief of the Church on the subject, especially if the theory can claim the support of the majority of eminent living critics. Try the theory. Examine into its truth with all the means and appliances at your command. If you have not time or opportunity to examine duly, suspend your judgment. Be in no hurry for a solution. Abide patiently "the long results" of investigation and research. Have no fear of them.

2. Even should you, at last, be convinced that the theory is ill-founded and altogether objectionable, nevertheless abstain most religiously from assailing it with any other weapons than those of legitimate reason and argument. Avoid all mere assertions, assumptions, evasions; all vague declamation and denunciation.

3. Be careful not to confound legitimate criticism—deductions from tangible literary, philological, or historical *data*—with sceptical assumptions or speculations.

4. Be equally careful not to class orthodox critics, men who admit the inspiration, the historic truth, and the supernatural element in Scripture, with sceptical or rationalistic writers, men who treat the Bible as an ordinary book. Never impute to such critics views or sentiments which they themselves repudiate, or which are not founded on any statements of theirs, but on your own inferences from their statements. Never charge them with any doctrine which does not necessarily flow from their views.

5. Beware of abetting by word or deed any sort of opposition to the full and free discussion of any of these critical theories by critics of any class. Rest assured that the only result of such opposition will be to raise an unjust prejudice

against the Scriptures, and hurt rather than help the cause you seek to promote. Tolerate all critics. Let them say their say.

6. And not only tolerate, but positively encourage every learned orthodox critic who attempts to provide a satisfactory explanation of the scriptural difficulties, whether the theory which he advocates appears to you sound and satisfactory or the reverse. Doubt not that his labours will produce some good effect, direct or indirect. The errors in his theory will be corrected by some other orthodox critic; and the more orthodox critics, and the greater number of explanations that can in any way be reconciled with orthodoxy, the better.

7. Have no fear of any permanent evil resulting from the criticism of even the most unsound critics. Critics "can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth." No critic can tamper with the original text of Scripture. Nothing that any critic may think or say of Scripture can alter the meaning of Scripture. False interpretations may be assigned by critics and for a time may prevail widely, but they are sure in these days to be quickly challenged by other critics. There is every year less and less risk of the prolonged prevalence of false critical views.

8. Distinguish carefully between the critical faculty, which is essential for the due analysis of the complexities of the earlier books of Scripture, and the faculty of spiritual insight necessary for a saving apprehension of the truths of the Christian faith. The two faculties belong to a different order, and may or may not co-exist in the same mind. The former, from the nature of the case, must be rare, the latter is within the reach of every faithful soul.

9. Whether you do or do not find a satisfactory key to the seeming discrepancies between the different sets of these ceremonial laws of old Israel, beware of attaching an exaggerated importance to them. Never lose sight of the fact that these laws have all been long abrogated and obsolete, and have for us in these latter days only a general interest. Had

they been meant to be binding on us as on God's ancient people some adequate means of distinguishing between them would have been supplied to us—something equivalent to the living prophetic voice of old—something that would have indicated clearly what was obsolete and what was in force.

10. Bear ever in mind that the laws which bind us, under this more advanced and final dispensation, are written in sacred books, whose meaning in all matters essential to salvation is clear and distinct—books which have been carefully collected and guarded, and authoritatively expounded by "the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth," and "a witness and a keeper of Holy Writ."

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